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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 002412

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN JASON MACK

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: EX-PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ RELEASED FROM HOUSE ARREST

REF: SAN JOSE 646 AND PREVIOUS

[¶1.](#) Former President Miguel Angel Rodriguez (1998-2002) was released from his seven-month house arrest on October 13, when prosecutors in his corruption case failed to convince a judge to grant yet another extension of his now nearly year-long pretrial detention. Rodriguez was arrested on October 16, 2004, upon his return from the U.S., where he resigned as president of the OAS after one month in the position. The corruption charges stem from allegations that Rodriguez received kickbacks from French telecommunications firm Alcatel during his presidency. Rodriguez spent five months in prison, then in March, 2005, won a small victory by being placed under house arrest. Despite his release, Rodriguez is still subject to substantial restrictions pending his trial: he cannot leave the country, must appear in person at the court every fifteen days, and is prohibited from close contact with co-defendants or witnesses in his case.

COMMENT

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[¶2.](#) With Rodriguez's release, the only major figure in the Alcatel scandal still being held pending corruption investigations is Rafael Angel Calderon (1990-1994). Calderon has lately mounted a campaign to gain "political prisoner" recognition, and will likely intensify his efforts.

Given that the evidence against Rodriguez is generally considered stronger than that against Calderon, we would expect that Calderon will be released on terms similar to Rodriguez's in the near future.

FRISBIE